

13,000 Troops have received nearly \$50 million in benefits owed

Washington, DC – Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) announced today more than 13,000 troops have received nearly \$50 million in Respite Leave benefits for extra time they served overseas. According to the Army, 13,010 troops were compensated \$49,564,000 for a combined 247,820 eligible days of extended deployment. Additionally, 14,962 of the 15,045 eligible soldiers have been contacted about their benefits.

“Today’s news further reinforces how critical and appropriate these Respite Leave benefits were,” Braley said. “Hundreds of Iowa National Guard members bravely served our country and waited patiently to be compensated. I spent more than two years to fix this problem and, as the first wave of Iowa’s National Guard deploy into Afghanistan, I’m glad to know those who earned these benefits were able to receive them before they redeployed.”

In Congress, Braley led efforts to fix this back pay problem and ensure that thousands of troops nationwide receive proper compensation. His Guaranteed Benefits for Our Troops Act (HR 1222) was signed into law in October as part of the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Act and enables the Pentagon to release the promised benefits.

Under Braley’s fix, hundreds of Iowa National Guard members will be provided benefits they were promised under the Department of Defense’s Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) program, commonly known as “Respite Leave.” Due to a delay between the announcement of the PDMRA program by the Department of Defense and the implementation of the program by the individual services, thousands of Army National Guard troops across the country did not receive proper Respite Leave compensation.

Braley first introduced the Guaranteed Benefits for Our Troops Act in July 2008. It allows the Pentagon to retroactively grant up to \$200 per day to affected troops.